

REGION 6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC: San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site

DATE: January 5, 2016

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PURPOSE: For Information – Cap Repair

DEADLINE DATE: N/A

BACKGROUND:

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site is situated east of the City of Houston along I-10 and once operated as a paper mill pulp disposal site. The pits were built in the mid-1960s along the banks of the San Jacinto River for disposal of pulp wastes containing dioxins. The former waste pits are currently partially submerged due to subsidence. In 2008, the site was added to the National Priorities List and in 2009, EPA issued an order to International Paper Company and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation, the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs), to conduct a site investigation. A removal action was also completed by the PRP's in July 2011 to install a temporary armor cap over the impoundments. The Site has experienced several extreme weather events since the cap was completed.

CURRENT STATUS:

- The EPA Dive Team completed an inspection of the submerged portions of the armored cap on December 10, 2015, and found a damaged area in the northwest area of the armored cap.
- In response to EPA's directive, the PRPs delineated the damaged area and collected sediment samples on December 23, 2015.
- Following EPA approval of the PRPs repair plan, repair of the damaged area was completed on December 31, 2015.

TECHNICAL CONCERNS:

- Bathymetric surveys during inspections did not indicate any cap deficiencies. Inspections initially done quarterly & now done twice per year. Last semi-annual inspection performed October 2015 and the last storm-event visual inspection 2 weeks later in October 2015.
- Probing done following construction in 2011 found design 1-foot minimum cap thickness in the area where the gap was discovered.
- Cause of damage is unknown, but appears consistent with a barge or boat strike.

ENVIRONMENTAL/PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS:

- Absence of the armor rock could expose contaminated soils and may result in a release of dioxins/furans to the San Jacinto River.

REGULATORY/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Verbally notified PRPs on December 11th, regarding the gap in the cap and the need to repair. Notified PRPs in writing December 16th to submit a repair plan in accordance with Operation, Monitoring & Maintenance plan.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS/OUTREACH:

- Texans Together (a community organization), Harris County, Galveston Bay Foundation, and others have expressed desires that the waste material be removed due to concerns about the long-term ability of any cap to withstand the extreme flooding.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SCHEDULE:

- Develop enhanced inspection plan. (February 2016)
- Develop and implement addition cap protection from barge strikes. (March 2016)



Placing geotextile over repair area.



Placing Type C Rock (6" median diameter) on top of geotextile layer in repair area.

